

§ 217.15

(e) An intervenor cannot continue an appeal if the appeal is dismissed (§ 217.11).

[54 FR 3357, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 58 FR 58916, Nov. 4, 1993]

§ 217.15 Appeal record.

(a) Upon receipt of a copy of the notice of appeal, the Deciding Officer shall assemble the relevant decision documentation (§ 217.2) and pertinent records, and transmit them to the Reviewing Officer within 30 days in appeal of non-significant amendments to land and resource management plans or within 60 days for appeals of land and resource management plan approvals, significant amendments, or revisions, and for other programmatic decisions. The time period for forwarding the decision documentation is not extendable.

(b) In transmitting the decision documentation to the Reviewing Officer, the Deciding Officer shall indicate where the documentation addresses the issues raised in the notice of appeal. The Deciding Officer shall provide a copy of the transmittal letter to the appellant(s) and intervenor(s).

(c) The review of decisions appealed under this part focuses on the documentation developed by the Deciding Officer in reaching decisions. The records on which the Reviewing Officer shall conduct the review consists of the notice of appeal, any written comments submitted by intervenors, the official documentation prepared by the Deciding Officer in the decisionmaking process, the Deciding Officer's letter transmitting those documents to the Reviewing Officer, and any appeal related correspondence, including additional information requested by the Reviewing Officer pursuant to § 217.13 of this part.

(d) It is the responsibility of the Reviewing Officer to maintain in one location a file of documents related to the decision and appeal.

(e) *Closing the record.* (1) In appeals with intervenors, the appeal record shall close upon receipt of comments on the appeal by the intervenor, but not later than the end of the 30-day period provided for intervenors to submit comments (§ 217.14(c)).

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(2) In appeals without intervenors, the appeal record shall close upon receipt of the decision documentation from the Deciding Officer, unless time has been extended as provided for in §§ 217.12 and 217.13.

(f) The appeal record is open to public inspection at any time during the review.

(g) In appeals involving initial decisions of the Chief (217.7(a)), the establishment of an administrative record as defined in paragraph (a) of this section shall not begin unless the Secretary elects to review the appeal. Except for the initial notice of appeal, any filings made previous to the Secretary's election to review will not be accepted.

[54 FR 3357, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34509, Aug. 21, 1989; 55 FR 7896, Mar. 6, 1990; 56 FR 4918, Feb. 6, 1991; 58 FR 58916, Nov. 4, 1993]

§ 217.16 Decision.

(a) The Reviewing Officer shall not issue a decision prior to the record closing (§ 217.15(e)).

(b) The Reviewing Officer's decision shall, in whole or in part, affirm or reverse the original decision. The Reviewing Officer's decision may include instructions for further action by the Deciding Officer.

(c) An appeal decision must be consistent with applicable law, regulations, and orders.

(d) The Reviewing Officer shall send a copy of the decision to all participants and to others upon request.

(e) Unless a higher level officer exercises the discretion to review a Reviewing Officer's decision as provided at § 217.7(d), the Reviewing Officer's decision is the final administrative decision of the Department of Agriculture and the decision is not subject to further review under this part.

[54 FR 3357, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 58 FR 58916, Nov. 4, 1993]

§ 217.17 Discretionary review.

(a) Petitions or requests for discretionary review shall not, in and of themselves, give rise to a decision to exercise discretionary review. In electing to exercise discretion, a Reviewing Officer should consider, but is not limited to, such factors as controversy surrounding the decision, the potential